

The Benefits of His Sacrifice

Romans 5:6-11

Series: Easter 2023: The Benefits of His Passion

Preaching Date: April 6, 2023

Text: Romans 5:6-11

Worship: Jesus Paid it All

Key Sentence: His sacrifice was for you; you are blessed through him

Outline:

I. Christ Died for Us (Romans 5:6-8)

II. Justified, Saved, Reconciled (Romans 5:9-10)

III. Therefore we Rejoice (Roman 5:11)

Romans 5:6–11 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Benefits of His Sacrifice Romans 5:6-11

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” This year for our Easter series we’re remembering the benefits of Christ’s kingship, his sacrifice and his resurrection. Earlier this year we studied Romans 5 and talked specifically from the first 11 verses about the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice. But like many of these Romans sermons, I got to focusing on the first part of the text and had to move more quickly over the second part than I wanted to. So tonight, as we consider the sacrifice of Christ, and as we remember the Lord’s Passover Supper, we’re going to look at the familiar and wonderful last six verses of that previous message in more detail. We get to dive deeper tonight into some of the benefits we saw last fall and celebrate them with communion. His sacrifice was for you and you are blessed through him

I. Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8)

Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8. *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. ⁸But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

The first thing to notice in these verses is how we are characterized. Verse 6 we were weak; we were ungodly; verse 7, by implication, we were unrighteous and not good; and verse 8 we were sinners. Verse 10, by the way, adds that we were enemies. This is a plain and dismal picture. If this is an honest assessment of people without Christ, and I believe it is, then no one could legitimately feel that they had earned or merited salvation: too weak to do what is right; too rebellious to want to; too unrighteous to be worth saving; not good enough to even be considered; we are sinners, plain and simple, through and through. We are a lost cause that no one would give a dime for. Our judgment, condemnation and demise would be pure and perfect justice.

Have you ever read *David Copperfield*, or seen one of the movie versions? If so you can’t help but remember Uriah Heep. The London Guardian recently called him “the smarmiest creep in Dickens. The subtitle of the article is “From his obsequious greediness to his superiority complex, Charles Dickens’ dastardly antagonist in David Copperfield gives us chills because he embodies our worst traits.” Exactly. Uriah Heep. It is the name of a man who will tell you he is the “umblest person going” while scheming to lord it over you.

It is the name of a man you don't want to touch. Copperfield says "But oh, what a clammy hand his was! as ghostly to the touch as to the sight! I rubbed mine afterwards, to warm it, and to rub his off." The article goes on to say "Heep's infamy is undoubted. He says one thing and means another. He takes employment and shelter in the house of Mr Wickfield, a good man, and he does everything he can to destroy him, to take over his business and to force his daughter into his bed. He is cloying, jerking and writhing. He is dishonest, cruel and, above all, greedy. He is a "monster in the garb of man". He is morally repugnant even when he sleeps: "There I saw him, lying on his back, with his legs extending to I don't know where, gurglings taking place in his throat, stoppages in his nose, and his mouth open like a post office."

Friends, there is a very real sense in which we are all as vile as Uriah Heep in God's sight; not in the same ways, but to the same degree of revulsion. It is this that Christ came to save. Christ died for us. Not for good people. Not for godly people. Paul says "One would scarcely die for a righteous person, though for a good person one might possibly dare to die." To stick with the Dickens theme, I was reminded the last time we studied this of *A Tale of Two Cities*. The last scene in the book is unforgettable. Sydney Carton substitutes himself and dies in the place of Charles Darnay or Charles Evrémonte. "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known." We honor the one who dies for a good man. But, verse 8 "God shows, demonstrates, proves his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We were not good people. We were not godly. Nobody dies for Uriah Heep. But Jesus did. Christ died for us.

This is the purest demonstration of love. And this is an objective demonstration. It's not just saying "I love you," or hoping we'll be fine. It is substituting himself in our place to pay the price of our sin. It is his real, historical death on the cross as well as his real, historical resurrection that demonstrates his love. Christ died for us. The Gospels are very circumspect in describing this. They basically just say "and they crucified him." There are none of the gory details of what crucifixion was or the agony it cause. It is the fact of the crucifixion that counts. If we seek any level of detail we have to look back to the Old Testament, to Psalm 22 or to Isaiah 53.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That's what we remember tonight. The love of God is shown to us on the cross. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Notice the last two words. They are very common words, simple words, but they carry a great weight. They remind us that we are the object of God's love, that we are the object of Christ's sacrifice. You are. I am. Jesus did not die for an abstract ideal or in defiance of the Roman government or to prove a point or even to set an example. He died for you. There is a direct line of love between his cross and your heart, between his cross and your need. While you were still weak, ungodly, unrighteous and ungood, an evil sinner, God showed you his love. Christ died for you. Let's pause and worship the Savior who died for us.

II. Justified, saved, reconciled (Romans 5:9-10)

In verses 9 and 10 of Romans 5 Paul gives us three key words that amplify our understanding of what happened on the cross, the benefits of the crucifixion. Romans 5:9 *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

The key words are justified, saved and reconciled. Paul has already used the word justified in this chapter. In verse 1 he says "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What does it mean to be justified? To be made righteous or right in God's eyes. It's a judicial thing. You and I didn't do anything to erase our sins and remove them from God's sight. But Jesus Christ absorbed the punishment for our sins. He took our sins on himself and experienced the just punishment of our sins in death. So he erased our sins in God's sight. As Paul says in 2nd Corinthians "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." That's justification. When I am justified it's just as if I'd never sinned.

This is the heart of the Gospel. Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." We are justified. But I want you to notice something. In our verse for tonight, Romans 5:9, we are justified by his blood. This verse looks to the cross, to the willing sacrifice of a humble Savior who, though he was in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be held onto, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

We are justified by his blood. The book of Hebrews teaches us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. But Romans 3:24 which we just read also tells us that we are justified by grace, as a gift, freely. That's key too. This justification is for no merit of our own. There is nothing in us that has earned it. It is a gift. Grace means God gives me what I don't deserve. But notice too, in Romans 5:1 that this same justification is by faith: "Therefore since we have been justified by faith." We receive the free gift of justification by faith alone, that is, the only thing we do is trust in Christ and in his sacrifice for us. We are justified by faith in the free gift bought with Christ's blood. Our record and our lives are made right in his sight through his son.

Dr. Roy Gustafson, who preached with Billy Graham, had a great illustration of justification. "There was a man in England who put his Rolls-Royce on a boat and went across to the continent on holiday. While he was driving around Europe, something happened to the motor of his car. He cabled the Rolls-Royce people back in England, "I'm having trouble with my car; what do you suggest I do?" Well, the Rolls-Royce people flew a mechanic over! The mechanic repaired the car, went back to England and left the man to continue his holiday. As you can imagine, the fellow was wondering, "How much is this going to cost me?" When he got back to England, he wrote the people a letter and asked how much he owed them. He received back a letter that read: "Dear Sir: There is no record anywhere in our files that anything ever went wrong with a Rolls-Royce." That is justification. There is no record anywhere in God's files that anything ever went wrong with us.

So the first benefit in these verses is justification. The second is salvation. Verse 9 again "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." The word "saved" simply means rescued. It's why Jesus came. He said "I've come to seek and save what was lost." His very name means Savior: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Salvation is rescue from sin. But it's also rescue from God's wrath and rescue from death. It's an all-encompassing word. That's why when the Philippian jailer asked "what must I do to be saved" Paul responded very simple "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." It's the overarching term. It's also the ultimate term. It's not only saved in the past by the work of Christ, it's not only saved in the present from the power of sin, but it's also saved in the future to eternal life in the presence of God. As we saw last Sunday, the king, the Lamb in the center of the throne will be our shepherd and he will wipe every tear from our eyes. That's the ultimate salvation.

One of my favorite pictures of salvation occurred on the Sea of Galilee when, in the midst of a great storm, Jesus walked on the water out to where the disciples were struggling in their boat. Peter, seeing him, said “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” And he did. Peter walked on the water. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and sank. Yet he had the presence of mind to cry out “Lord, save me.” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, pulled him up. Rescued him. And the same is true of us. “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be rescued.”

We are justified. We are saved. And finally, we are reconciled. If justification is a legal standing image and salvation is a physical rescue image, reconciliation is a family relationship image. It is two estranged people coming back into relationship. Paul says that “while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” In other words God took the initiative toward reconciliation on the cross. He gave His only Son to restore the broken relationship between people and himself.

D. L. Moody used to tell a story about a mother in New York whose son had pursued sinful and hurtful habits, harming himself and others. His father had no patience with this behavior and after correcting and threatening to no avail, he angrily turned his son out of the home. He left vowing he would never return unless his father asked him, which the father said would never be. Grief over her son wore the mother down and she grew ill and ultimately lay dying. When her husband asked if there was nothing he could do for her before she departed this life, she said, "Yes, you can send for my boy." The father was at first unwilling, but at length, seeing her so near her end, he sent for his son. The young man came, but as he entered the sick-room his father turned his back upon him and would not speak to him.

Then this wife and mother approached her end, and both men came, still standing on opposite sides of her bed, all love and sorrow for her, but not exchanging a word with each other. She asked the father to forgive the boy; no, he wouldn't until the son asked it. Turning to him, she begged of him to ask his father's forgiveness; no, his proud heart would not let him take the first step. Just as she was dying, with one last effort she got hold of her husband's hand in one hand, and her son's in the other, and exerting all her feeble strength, she joined their hands, and, with one last appealing look, she was gone. Beginning with that touch, they were reconciled, but it took the mother's death to bring it about.” Moody would then say “Even so, has not God made a great sacrifice that we might be reconciled, even the death of His own dear Son? He has.”

The biblical parallel to this is the story of the prodigal son who finally came to the place of returning to his father, but when he came in sight of the estate he saw his father run to him with compassion and embrace and kissed him. Then he restored all that the son had lost. This is the reconciliation God desired.

Many of you will know that my favorite Christmas carol is “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” I love the theology, the Biblical truth in that carol. And the first substantive Biblical truth that Charles Wesley mentions is reconciliation. “Hark! The herald angels sing; glory to the newborn king; peace on earth and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled.”

We’ve seen that Christ died for us. From his death, by faith we receive justification from the guilt of our sin, salvation from the consequences of our sin and reconciliation with the one we’ve sinned against. We’re going to stop again now, and we will worship again in a few minutes. But first we want to step back 2000 years to the upper room of a building in Jerusalem where Jesus himself will tell us what was happening on that cross.

III. Therefore we rejoice (Roman 5:11)

The last verse in our text calls us to a response, and the response is to rejoice. This may seem to be a little out of place. After all, we’ve just relived the sacrifice of Jesus, his body broken and his blood shed. It is in some sense the saddest moment in the history of the world. Yet God would not have us forget that this sacrifice has tremendous benefits to us. He died for us, and by his death we are saved. We are made righteous in God’s sight and reconciled to him in love. Thus, despite the solemnity of his sacrifice, we are called to rejoice in his blessings. Verse 11: More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

How do we respond to the benefits God has given us? How do we respond to reconciliation, though it was bought at the greatest price? Even without Easter Sunday, which is not mentioned here, we are told to rejoice. Look at what God has done, look at the sacrifice and suffering of Christ, look at your own unworthiness, look at the immensity of his love, and rejoice. Paul has already said this in Romans 5: “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Notice the words “through him.” Those are the other two of the four words I want you to remember tonight. The first two were “for you.” Christ died for you. The last two are “through him.” You are blessed “through him.”

Paul and the other New Testament writers use this phrase a lot. In Colossians Paul says “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” In Ephesians he says that “through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father.” Peter says that we are saved with the precious blood of Christ, and through him you and I are believers in God. John says it well “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.”

Everything comes through him. Salvation. Justification. Reconciliation. Jesus is the center on which the whole of redemption turns. It is through Jesus that God’s love is expressed to a lost and broken world. It is through Jesus that his forgiveness is offered. It is through Jesus that our guilt is dealt with. It is through Jesus that our rescue is offered. It is through Jesus that we experience restoration to the presence and the peace of God. Nothing that has been done to bless humanity has been done without Jesus. It is all through Jesus.

So remember these four words as you consider the cross and the resurrection. “for you; through him.” His sacrifice was for you; you are blessed through him.